

## TWO CHEERS FOR THE BEATLES

The Beatles (page 30) have come and gone. Press-agentry has scored one of its greatest triumphs since the Ringling Brothers' Thomas Leef planted a midget on J. P. Morgan's knee. Thousands of squealing teen-agers met the mop-heads at Kennedy Airport. Our heroes, John, George, Paul and Ringo, were locked in private limousines—we are not sure who was being protected from whom—and transported in regal style to the Plaza Hotel in New York City. Word leaked out from that great hostelry that George had taken to bed "wracked with overindulgence." Mercifully—for teen-agers—it was not fatal. George struggled up from his bed of pain to join his hairy mates for the first of three appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. (It was said that these three hours were the only ones in recent history in which not a single hubcap was stolen in America.) The New York *Herald Tribune* compared the young audience's caterwauling to "that terrible screech the BMT Astoria train makes as it turns east near 59th Street and Seventh Avenue."

From New York the Beatles journeyed down to Washington and an imbroglio at the British embassy, then back to New York for Carnegie Hall and finally on to Miami. They may have brought little harmony, but they proved that we are more advanced than our mother country, having passed some time ago from the Paleolithic Presley era to the higher cultural level of the hootenanny. The Beatles displayed an ingratiating quality, one that is all too rare in show-business people: They refused to take their "talent" or themselves too seriously. More than anything, however, they served for a time to divert us. We wish them well. We like them better than Cyprus, Panama or South Vietnam.

## BOBBY BAKER'S NONAPPEARANCE ON TV

Bobby Baker is not our favorite character. He was the most important and the most trusted employee of the Senate. Whether he is legally in contempt of the Senate Rules Committee is not for us to decide, but his contempt for the reputation of the Senate and for the confidence that was reposed in him is stereophonic.

Depressing as Baker's appearance before the Senate Rules Committee was, however, it may have served a useful purpose. For once, a committee of the Senate respected the wishes of a witness with regard to television even though the witness refused to cooperate with the committee. It took an illogical hassle to bring the committee to this decision. As explained during the hearing, the committee's Rule 11 provides that TV lights and cameras will be turned off the witness on his request. The rest of the hearing is covered, and the witness is omitted—a ridiculously indecorous and unfair way of covering any judicial or quasi-judicial proceeding.

Baker's counsel, Edward Bennett Williams, said he was requesting that TV cameras and lights be barred not in accordance with Rule 11 but because the hearing was being held "solely for the purpose of the television cameras." That line of argument was bound to infuriate the senators. (Sen. Carl Curtis, Republican of Nebraska, demanded that Williams "withdraw that statement or be expelled from the room." There was no retraction and he was not expelled.) It was to the credit of the committee that it decided to bar TV in spite of this provocation and without invoking Rule 11. The decision was a wise one and it is to be hoped that a precedent was established, one that other Senate committees will follow. (House committees bar TV completely; Senate committees decide individually.)

Writing in *The Post* almost two years ago (THE FINAL IRONY OF JOE McCARTHY, June 9, 1962), Edward Bennett Williams set forth the reasons for barring TV long before he undertook the defense of Bobby Baker. "When a witness objects to having his testimony broadcast or telecast," he said, "I think his wish should be respected. The average person is extremely nervous at appearing as a witness before a court or committee. It is unfair to ask him to appear before the entire country as well. If he objects strenuously to the broadcast or the televising, his testimony may be affected by nervousness or fear of public opinion. Further, it is a serious and unnecessary invasion of his privacy to project his face and voice into millions of homes without his consent."

These are compelling reasons. No one should be forced to appear on TV against his will. Whether he is Frank Costello, Jimmy Hoffa or Bobby Baker is beside the point. Every witness deserves the same fair, responsible treatment.

## THREE MEN AGAINST THE TIDE

Individualism used to be a celebrated American trait. But in this age of galloping conformity, the person who stands against the mob, or refuses to go along, is likely to be regarded as a freak. In recent weeks three Americans have resisted the tide of conformity or stood against the mob in impressive but very different ways.

E. Kenneth Froslid, of Port Washington, Long Island, felt that the state of New York had no right to make him advertise the World's Fair on his 1964 license plates. He went into court and sued the state. The result was that a New York State Supreme Court justice ordered the Department of Motor Vehicles to provide unadorned license plates for Froslid and anyone else who requested them. It was not a momentous decision, but as a triumph of man over bureaucracy it was a beauty.

In Ghana a mob surged around the U.S. embassy and tore down the American flag. Emerson Player, of Denver, a Negro embassy official, rushed out in defiance of the mob and ran the flag back up the staff. The act was not earthshaking, but if he had done it in wartime, somebody probably would be putting up a monument to him.

Mayor Arthur J. Holland, of Trenton, N.J., believed in integration and wanted to buy an old-fashioned house. So he bought an old-fashioned house in an integrated neighborhood, instead of following the trend to the suburbs. There is nothing heroic about living next to Negroes. But we like the way the mayor suited his actions to his beliefs. Like Mr. Froslid and Mr. Player, he refused to go along with the tide.



# BUILDING THE BEATLE IMAGE

By Vance Packard



*In New York store, mom and daughter don Beatle wigs.*

*At Beatle bash, Washington cop used bullet earplugs.*



What causes an international craze like the current Beatlemania?

Press agency can only swell a craze. To get one started you need to bring into fusion five vital ingredients. This is true whether the craze involves Davy Crockett, Liberace or Elvis Presley.

Only three years ago it is doubtful that any observer of pop culture would have picked the Beatles to inspire madness on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1961 the Beatles affected a beatnik look. They wore black T-shirts, black leather jackets, blue jeans and disheveled hair. In one picture taken of them that year they scowled at the camera as good beatniks should.

Then along came Brian Epstein, an aristocratic-looking young Englishman who ran a record shop and soon became their manager. First he made them scrub, comb their hair and get into civilized clothing. Then little by little, by a combination of hunch, luck and design, he began exploiting the five ingredients that will create a craze.

First, the Beatles needed a symbol that would make them stand out in people's minds, a symbol such as the coonskin cap that Walt Disney gave to his Davy Crockett creation. For a symbol it was decided to exploit their already overlong hair. The Beatles let it grow longer and bushier, combed it forward—and then had it immaculately trimmed. The result was not only eye-catching but evocative. Such hairdos were common in the Middle Ages and the new coiffure suggested the ancient roots of England.

A second ingredient necessary for a craze is to fill some important subconscious need of teenagers. Youngsters see themselves as a subjugated people constantly exposed to arbitrary edicts from adult authorities. The entertainment world has developed many strategies to offer youngsters a sense of escape from adult domination. Television producers of children's shows sometimes make adult figures either stupid or villainous. The press agents for some teen stars publicize the stars' defiance of their parents. Teen-age crooners relate with amiable condescension their support of their parents.

Rock-'n'-roll music, of course, annoys most parents, which is one of the main reasons why millions of youngsters love it. But the Beatles couldn't possibly hope to outdo Elvis Presley in appalling parents. Instead of open opposition, the Beatles practice an amiable impudence and a generalized disrespect for just about everybody. They succeeded, happily, in getting themselves denounced in some pretty high adult places. The Lord Privy Seal indicated his annoyance. And Field Marshal Lord Montgomery growled that the Army would take care of those mop-top haircuts if the Beatles were ever conscripted.

But the Beatles—under Mr. Epstein's tutelage—also have put stress on filling other subconscious needs of teenagers. As restyled, they are no longer roughnecks but rather lovable, almost cuddly, imps. With their collarless jackets and boyish grins, they have succeeded in bringing out the mothering instinct in many adolescent girls.

The subconscious need that they fill most expertly is in taking adolescent girls clear out of this world. The youngsters in the darkened audiences can let go all inhibitions in a quite primitive sense when the Beatles cut loose. They can retreat from rationality and individuality. Mob pathology takes over, and they are momentarily freed of all of civilization's restraints.

The Beatles have become peculiarly adept at giving girls this release. Their relaxed, confident manner, their wild appearance, their whooping and jumping, their electrified rock-'n'-roll pulsing out into the darkness makes the girls want to jump—and then scream. The more susceptible soon faint or develop twitching hysteria. (One reason why Russia's totalitarian leaders frown on rock-'n'-roll and jazz is that these forms offer people release from controlled behavior.)

A third ingredient needed to get a craze started—as Brian Epstein obviously knew—is an exciting sense of freshness. In an informal poll conducted through my offspring, who are at high school and college, I find that the fact that the Beatles are somehow "different"—something new in the musical world—made the deepest impression. Teen-agers feel they are helping create something new that is peculiarly their own. And as my 15-year-old expert (feminine) explained, "We were kind of at a lag with popular singers."

The delivery, if not the music, is refreshingly different with the Beatles. Surliness is out, exuberance is in. Sloppiness is out, cleanliness is in. Self-pity is out, whooping with joy is in. Pompousness is out, humor is in.

A fourth ingredient needed to keep a craze rolling once it shows signs of starting is a carrying device, such as a theme song. The carrying device of the Beatles is found in their name. It playfully suggests beatnik, but it also suggests "beat"—and the beat is the most conspicuous feature of the Beatles' music. It is laid on heavily with both drums and bass guitar. When the screaming starts, the beat still gets through.

Finally, a craze can succeed only if it meets the mood of the times. England, after centuries of cherishing the subdued, proper form of life, is bursting out of its inhibitions. There has been a growth of open sexuality, plain speaking and living it up. The Beatles came along at just the right time to help the bursting-out process.

What is the future of the Beatle craze in America? At this point it is hard to say. But the Beatles are so dependent upon their visual appeal that there is a question whether they can sustain the craze in their American territory from across the Atlantic. Another problem is that they are not really offensive enough to grown-ups to inspire youngsters to cling to them.

Frankly, if I were in the business of manufacturing mophead Beatle wigs, I would worry. Crazes tend to die a horribly abrupt death. It was not so long ago, after all, that a good many unwary businessmen got caught with warehouses full of coonskin caps when the Crockett craze stopped almost without warning.

THE END